

Amendments to the Claims:

Listing of Claims:

1-36. (Canceled)

37. (Currently Amended) A ~~computer implemented~~ method comprising:

responsive to a first input to a computer by a first user of an instant messaging service ~~adapted~~ configured for sending and receiving a plurality of text messages in real time between the first user and a second user, determining, by a processor of the computer based only on the first input, that a topic tag is to be inserted into a text message of an instant messaging session, wherein the instant messaging service is ~~adapted~~ configured to accept the first input before the instant messaging session begins, during the instant messaging session, and after the instant messaging session;

responsive to a second input to the computer by the second user, determining by the processor, one of a first acceptance and a rejection of the topic tag by the second user;

responsive to the first acceptance, automatically inserting the topic tag, by the processor, into the text of the instant messaging session when a turn is identified by the processor, wherein a turn means a shift in a textual communication during the instant messaging session indicated by a plurality of successive statements;

responsive to the rejection, continuing the instant messaging session without an insertion of the topic tag;

responsive to a third input to the computer by the first user, determining by the processor of the computer that a sub-topic tag is to be inserted into a segment of the text corresponding to the sub-topic, wherein the instant messaging service is ~~adapted~~ configured to accept the third input before the instant messaging session begins, during the instant messaging session, and after the instant messaging session;

responsive to a fourth input to the computer, determining by the processor, a second acceptance of the sub-topic tag by the second user;

responsive to the second acceptance, automatically placing the sub-topic tag, by the processor, into the segment of the text when a change from a topic shift occurs in the instant messaging session;

displaying a graphical user interface that has a first area for displaying the chat transcript of the instant messaging session and that displays a topic list at an end of the chat transcript, a first sub-topic tab, and a second sub-topic tab; and

wherein upon activation of a selected topic in the topic list, the selected topic is displayed with a first corresponding transcript segment in a second area of the graphical user interface, upon activation of the first sub-topic tab, the first sub-topic is displayed with a second corresponding transcript segment in a third area of the graphical user interface, and upon activation of the second sub-topic tab, the second sub-topic is displayed with a third corresponding transcript segment in a fourth area of the graphical user interface.

38. (Canceled)

39. (Currently Amended) The ~~computer implemented~~ method of claim 37 further comprising:

saving a transcript of the instant messaging session to a repository;

searching the repository for the topic tag; and

responsive to determining that there is a match between the topic tag in the repository and an entry in an auto alert table, exporting an associated transcript segment to an e-mail.

40. (Currently Amended) ~~An apparatus~~ A system comprising:

a computer connected to a plurality of remote computers and to an instant messaging service by a network, the instant messaging service ~~adapted~~ configured for sending and receiving a plurality of text messages in real time between a plurality of users on the plurality of remote computers;

a computer readable memory and a non-transitory computer readable storage medium;

first program instructions for determining, ~~a program in the memory adapted to cause a processor of the computer,~~ responsive to a first input to the computer by a first user, ~~to determine~~ that a topic tag is to be inserted into a text message of an instant messaging session, wherein the

instant messaging service is ~~adapted~~ configured to accept the first input before the instant messaging session begins, during the instant messaging session, and after the instant messaging session;

second program instructions for determining, responsive to a second input to the computer by the second user, ~~determining by the processor~~, an acceptance of the topic tag by the second user;

third program instructions for automatically inserting, responsive to the acceptance, ~~automatically inserting~~ the topic tag, ~~by the processor~~, into the text of the instant messaging session when a turn is identified ~~by the processor~~, wherein a turn means a shift in a textual communication during the instant messaging session indicated by a plurality of successive statements;

fourth program instructions for determining, responsive to a third input to the computer by the first user, ~~determining by the processor of the computer~~ that a sub-topic tag is to be inserted into a segment of the text, wherein the instant messaging service is ~~adapted~~ configured to accept the third input before the instant messaging session begins, during the instant messaging session, and after the instant messaging session;

fifth program instructions for determining, responsive to a fourth input to the computer, ~~determining by the processor~~, an acceptance of the sub-topic tag by the second user;

sixth program instructions for automatically placing, responsive to the acceptance, ~~automatically placing~~ the sub-topic tag, ~~by the processor~~, into the segment of the text when a topic shift occurs in the instant messaging session;

seventh program instructions for displaying a graphical user interface that has a first area for displaying the chat transcript of the instant messaging session and that displays a topic list at an end of the chat transcript, a first sub-topic tab, and a second sub-topic tab; and

eighth program instructions for displaying, responsive to ~~wherein upon~~ activation of a topic in the topic list, the topic is ~~displayed~~ with a first corresponding transcript segment in a second area of the graphical user interface, responsive to ~~wherein upon~~ activation of the first sub-topic tab, displaying the first sub-topic is ~~displayed~~ with a second corresponding transcript segment in a third area of the graphical user interface, and responsive to ~~wherein upon~~ activation of the second sub-topic tab, displaying the second sub-topic is ~~displayed~~ with a third corresponding transcript segment in a fourth area of the graphical user interface;

wherein the first through the eighth program instructions are stored in the non-transitory computer readable storage medium for running by a processor of the computer via the computer readable memory.

41. (Canceled)

42. (Currently Amended) The ~~apparatus~~ system of claim 40 further comprising:
ninth program instructions for saving a transcript of the instant messaging session to a repository;

tenth program instructions for searching the repository for the topic tag; and
eleventh program instructions for exporting, responsive to determining that there is a match between the topic tag in the repository and an entry in an auto alert table, ~~exporting~~ an associated transcript segment to an e-mail;

wherein the ninth, tenth, and eleventh program instructions are stored in the non-transitory computer readable storage medium for running by a processor of the computer via the computer readable memory.

43. (Currently Amended) A computer program product comprising:

a non-transitory computer readable ~~and tangible~~ storage medium;
first program instructions to connect a computer a program stored in the computer
~~readable and tangible storage medium adapted to cause a computer connected to a plurality of remote computers and to an instant messaging service by a network, wherein the instant messaging service is adapted~~ configured for sending and receiving a plurality of text messages in real time between a plurality of users on the plurality of remote computers, ~~to perform steps comprising:~~

second program instructions for determining, responsive to a first input to the computer by a first user, ~~determining~~ that a topic tag is to be inserted into a text message of an instant messaging session, wherein the instant messaging service is ~~adapted~~ configured to accept the first input before the instant messaging session begins, during the instant messaging session, and after the instant messaging session;

third program instructions for determining, responsive to a second input to the computer by the second user, ~~determining by the processor~~, an acceptance of the topic tag by the second user;

fourth program instructions for automatically inserting, responsive to the acceptance, ~~automatically inserting~~ the topic tag, ~~by the processor~~, into the text of the instant messaging session when a turn is identified ~~by the processor~~, wherein a turn means a shift in a textual communication during the instant messaging session indicated by a plurality of successive statements;

fifth program instructions for determining, responsive to a third input to the computer by the first user, ~~determining by the processor of the computer~~ that a sub-topic tag is to be inserted into a segment of the text, wherein the instant messaging service is ~~adapted~~ configured to accept the third input before the instant messaging session begins, during the instant messaging session, and after the instant messaging session;

sixth program instructions for determining, responsive to a fourth input to the computer, ~~determining by the processor~~, an acceptance of the sub-topic tag by the second user;

seventh program instructions for automatically placing, responsive to the acceptance, ~~automatically placing~~ the sub-topic tag, ~~by the processor~~, into the segment of the text when a topic shift occurs in the instant messaging session;

eighth program instructions for displaying a graphical user interface that has a first area for displaying the chat transcript of the instant messaging session and that displays a topic list at an end of the chat transcript, a first sub-topic tab, and a second sub-topic tab; and

ninth program instructions for displaying, responsive to ~~wherein upon~~ activation of a topic in the topic list, the topic ~~is displayed~~ with a first corresponding transcript segment in a second area of the graphical user interface, ~~[[upon]] responsive to~~ activation of the first sub-topic tab, displaying the first sub-topic ~~is displayed~~ with a second corresponding transcript segment in a third area of the graphical user interface, and ~~[[upon]] responsive to~~ activation of the second sub-topic tab, displaying the second sub-topic ~~is displayed~~ with a third corresponding transcript segment in a fourth area of the graphical user interface;

wherein the first through the ninth program instructions are stored in the non-transitory computer readable storage medium.

44. (Canceled)

45. (Currently Amended) The computer program product of claim 43 further comprising:
tenth program instructions for saving a transcript of the instant messaging session to a repository;

eleventh program instructions for searching the repository for the topic tag; and

twelfth program instructions for exporting, responsive to determining that there is a match between the topic tag in the repository and an entry in an auto alert table, ~~exporting~~ an associated transcript segment to an e-mail;

wherein the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth program instructions are stored in the non-transitory computer readable medium.